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Honorable William C. Foster
Director, US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Foster:

Thank you for sending us a copy of your September 26 letter to Secretary McNamara, which requested the comments of the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs on the current draft proposal for a nuclear non-diffusion agreement.

I understand that General Carter has already made known our reservations about parts of the September 18 draft letters [redacted] It occurred to me that further comments might be useful to you.

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As you know, we believe that the material transmitted to the Committee of Principals on September 18 exaggerated both the imminence and the probable scale of nuclear diffusion. In addition to the considerations discussed in NIE 4-3-61, with which you are familiar, I should like to add that we also consider the cost of acquiring a nuclear weapons capability still to be an important deterrent. It is true that costs are in general declining as uranium becomes easier to obtain, as plutonium becomes more widely available and as information on weapons technology increases. Nonetheless, the minimum cost is still on the order of two hundred million dollars merely to acquire a single crude nuclear weapon. This does not allow anything for an effective modern delivery system. [redacted]

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A second point we would like to make concerns the feasibility of keeping Communist China from acquiring nuclear weapons. The September 18 draft letter to the President stated that "... the possibility of

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obtaining the adherence of Communist China to such an agreement is very remote unless the appeal can be put as a joint effort by the three Western nuclear powers." We would go considerably farther than this statement. We believe that the Communist Chinese are determined to go ahead with their nuclear weapons program and that the Soviets do not have (and are not likely to acquire) the leverage to produce a change in this decision. In July, Chinese Communist Foreign Minister Chen-yi stated in a speech that the Chinese were going ahead with their program and would achieve success soon. Early in September, the Peiping People's Daily charged that the real purpose of US disarmament proposals was to tie China's hands in developing nuclear weapons. We suspect that the Chinese are well aware of what is in the wind and that these remarks and their timing are not coincidental. Thus we should be very cautious in assuming that it is feasible to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of the Chinese Communists or that other nations (including the USSR) will find this one of the practical benefits of a nuclear non-diffusion agreement.

With the hope that these observations will be helpful to you,

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Ray S. Cline
Deputy Director (Intelligence)

[Redacted Date] 28 September 1962

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